



TOWN OF ACTON
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Planning Department

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

To: Planning Board **Date:** March 14, 2009
From: Kristin K. Alexander, AICP, Assistant Town Planner *YKA*
Subject: Post Road Carpet Sign Special Permit – 141 Great Road

Location: 141 Great Road
Map and Parcel: F-4/37-3
Zoning: Limited Business (LB)
Request: a wider sign than allowed under Acton Zoning Bylaw Section 7.7.4.3
Applicant/Owner: Sam Paolini, Post Road Carpet, Acton, MA
c/o Darlene McCarthy, Viewpoint Sign and Awning, Marlboro, MA
Public Hearing: March 17, 2009 (7:45 PM)
Decision Due: June 15, 2009

Below is the history of the Post Road Carpet Sign Special Permit proposal followed by the Planning Department's comments. Other Town departments and committees have also reviewed the application and appear to have no issues with the sign special permit application and/or request. Their review sheets are attached. The applicant has received all department/committee comments, a copy of this memo, and the draft decision (attached).

Background

Post Road Carpet wants to replace the wall sign on the front of its building facing Great Road (Sign License #2926) with a larger sign. The proposed sign is wider than the Acton Zoning Bylaw (Bylaw) allows. According to applicant/owner, the larger sign will give Post Road Carpet the needed business exposure, as well as be attractive to the viewing public. Bylaw Section 7.7.4.3 limits the width of wall signs to 30 feet in business zoning districts. Bylaw Section 7.13.1.2a) provides the Planning Board (Board) with the authority to grant a special permit for a sign up to one and one half times wider than the maximum width. The proposed sign is 45 feet wide.

In addition to the existing wall sign on the front of the building, Post Road Carpet has a freestanding sign and a temporary A-frame sign (advertising a "special" and "50% off" sale) installed near Great Road (see attached staff photos taken 2/13/09-3/13/09). Post Road Carpet was granted a Sign Special Permit for the freestanding sign from the Planning Board in 2003 (and subsequently a sign license from the Building Department: originally Sign License #2728, now Sign License #2901) because the sign was larger than the Bylaw allowed. According to Acton Zoning Enforcement Officer records, Post Road Carpet never received a permit for the temporary A-frame sign.

Comments

1. The sign location plan identifies the incorrect sign to be replaced. It is highlighting the existing freestanding sign. As mentioned previously, there is currently only one sign on the building, and it is located on the front of the building between the "Sign #2" and "Sign #3" labels on the plan. The proposed wall sign would replace that wall sign. I have highlighted the proposed location in blue on the plan.
2. The Post Road Carpet building is set back from Great Road pavement by approximately 150 feet (approximately 140 feet from the front property line). Even though the building is not small, the +/-150 setback may make the business difficult for people to notice who are driving on Great Road.
3. The entire fascia (shown in green and labeled as "Facia Painted (by others)" on the detailed sign drawing), including the portion that wraps around the edges of the building, must be painted to be considered wall area and not wall sign display area. If it was considered wall sign display area, the proposed sign would not comply with Bylaw Section 7.7.4.1 which limits the maximum sign display area to 81 square feet. This comment has been incorporated into the draft decision as a condition.
4. As mentioned previously, the property has a temporary A-frame sign located near the access driveway advertising a "special" and "50% off" sale. This sign has not received a permit; therefore, should be removed from the property. This comment has been incorporated into the draft decision as a finding and condition.
5. The proposed wall sign complies with the height, display area, location, lighting, and materials requirements of the Bylaw.
6. The proposed wall sign would be appropriate in scale, design, and proportion to the architecture of the Post Road Carpet building.

Planning Department staff believes the issues stated above under "Comments" are relatively minor in nature and can easily be addressed by the Applicant. As a result, I have attached a draft decision for your review. Even with this special permit in hand, should the Planning Board grant it more or less as drafted, the applicant must still obtain a sign license from the Building Department.